



Office of the  
Commissioner of  
Official Languages

Commissariat  
aux langues  
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[Home](#) > [Newsroom](#) > [News Releases](#) > [News Releases \(2000\)](#) > Ottawa, June 16, 2000

**Ottawa, June 16, 2000**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **New ways of serving the Canadian public: The Commissioner of Official Languages presents a study on cooperation between communities and the federal government**

The Commissioner of Official Languages, Dr. Dyane Adam, released a study today entitled, *Cooperation Between the Government and the Communities: New Models for Service Delivery*. This study is important because it proposes a series of principles that should guide the establishment of partnerships for the delivery of certain government services by groups from minority official language communities. "I hope that this document will become an indispensable tool for ensuring that these new methods for the delivery of government services respect the *Official Languages Act* and truly support the vitality of the communities," the Commissioner declared.

This study developed an inventory of some 100 examples of cases where the government has transferred responsibility for the delivery of a government service to community groups from the linguistic minority. These new models for cooperation are almost all linked to human resources development or to the economic sector. They are more common in Western Canada and Southern Ontario, and rarer in the Atlantic region and in Quebec.

Three typical examples were analyzed in detail:

- the London-Sarnia regional ACFO (Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario) model, a community agency that signed an agreement with Human Resources Development Canada to offer employability services to the local Francophone community;
- the Éducacentre model in British Columbia, an agency that offers a series of employability services in French;
- the National Committee for Canadian Francophonie Human Resources Development, which offers services at the national level and works closely with the Regroupements de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE) in the provinces.

Dr. Adam noted that these three cases seem to represent arrangements that allow the delivery to a linguistic minority of services that are equal to those provided to the majority.

However, in order to ensure that such arrangements truly contribute to the vitality of minority official language communities and respect the spirit and intent of the *Official Languages Act*, certain principles must be respected.

The Commissioner feels that these models of cooperation must:

- as a minimum, preserve acquired rights, including access to and the exercise of remedies, while clearly guaranteeing to the public concerned the right to services pursuant to the provisions of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Official Languages Act* and the *Regulations*;
- define and establish mechanisms that will give the minority official language community services truly equal to those provided to the official language majority;

- provide for appropriate control and evaluation mechanisms;
- be established on a multi-year basis and ensure the stability of the service provided to the community;
- provide for concrete transition measures that fully respect the principle of equality, should the service be reabsorbed into the federal institution in question.

The Commissioner has outlined a series of recommendations to support the efforts of community groups and federal institutions, which are developing these new models of cooperation. These recommendations are attached.

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#### Information

#### Commissioner's Representatives

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### **Recommendations from the Commissioner of Official Languages**

#### *Cooperation Between the Government and Communities: New Models for Service Delivery*

#### **Recommendation to Community Groups**

Any community group that wishes to establish a model of cooperation with a federal institution to provide a government service must:

- ensure community support and coordinate its efforts with those of other community groups;
- conduct a needs study and do implementation planning;
- preferably, establish an independent agency that will provide the service; and
- ensure that this new model of cooperation contributes, by the quality of the service provided, to the advancement toward equality of the minority and majority communities.

#### **Recommendations to Federal Institutions**

#### **Recommendation 1: Monitoring of New Models of Cooperation**

That the Committee of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Official Languages assign the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Department of Canadian Heritage the responsibility of establishing, within the next six months, a central data collection system to monitor the development of models of cooperation between federal institutions and community groups that lead to the delivery of government services or programs to the minority official language communities.

That the Committee of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Official Languages assign the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Department of Canadian Heritage the responsibility for developing a management framework for models of cooperation between the government and community groups for the delivery of services in order to ensure respect for the spirit and intent of the *Official Languages Act*. This framework should be operational by March 31, 2001.

#### **Recommendation 2: Overall Evaluation of Models of Cooperation**

That the Treasury Board, in 2002-2003, provide for an overall evaluation of the results achieved following the implementation of new models of cooperation between federal institutions and community groups that lead to the delivery of government services or programs to the minority official language communities.

**Recommendation 3: Needs Analysis and Implementation Planning**

That each federal institution concerned provide adequate financial resources for the conduct of a needs study and for planning of the implementation of a new model of cooperation with a community agency for the delivery of a government service to an official language minority community.

**Recommendation 4: Control and Accountability Mechanisms**

That each federal institution concerned ensure in all cases that appropriate control and accountability mechanisms are put in place during the planning and implementation of a new model of cooperation with an official language minority community or one of its agencies for the delivery of a service. These mechanisms must, among other things, guarantee respect for the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Official Languages Act* and the *Official Languages Regulations*.

**Recommendation 5: Respect for the Principle of Equality**

That each federal institution concerned ensure full respect for the principle of equality which is at the heart of the language rights of Canadians and for the quality standards applicable to the delivery of a government service by a community group.

That the federal institution concerned ensure that the employees of the community groups that deliver the service acquire and integrate the required professional and linguistic skills.

That the federal institution concerned periodically conduct a formal evaluation to measure the quality of the services provided by the community group and to ensure their equality.

**Recommendation 6: Long-term Stability of the Provision of Service**

When any model of cooperation by which a community group, directly or by subcontracting, ensures the delivery of a government service, each federal institution concerned must ensure that the delivery is planned on a multi-year basis. Such a model of cooperation must be part of a coherent framework and well-considered departmental strategy to promote the vitality of the communities. The federal institution must provide for a reasonable transition period in the event of the non-renewal of a model of cooperation. In this case, the federal institution must also establish appropriate mechanisms for reabsorbing the service in a way which promotes the advancement toward equality of English and French.

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